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M-NCPPC and County Council Announce Protection of Maiden's Fancy through Legacy Open Space

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission's (M-NCPPC) Montgomery County Planning Board and the Montgomery County Council announced they have a contract to acquire 41 acres of the Maiden's Fancy property as the Commission's first water supply protection acquisition under the Legacy Open Space program. This property is located off Riding Stable Road on Aitcheson Lane in Burtonsville. The site is located within 600 feet of Rocky Gorge Reservoir and contains two streams that drain directly into the reservoir pool. This is the first acquisition of property under the Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan to preserve lands that protect our water supply resources.

M-NCPPC has a contract to purchase the property from The University of Maryland College Park Foundation and Genevieve A. Crook for \$950,000 using FY02 Legacy Open Space funds approved by the Montgomery County Council. The property contains a total of approximately 41 acres and will be added to the County's park system. The property will be managed as Patuxent River conservation parkland, with maintenance of existing forest and planting of new forest the primary activities in the short term. Preservation of stream valley and wetland forest buffers, such as those found on this property, protects the water quality in Rocky Gorge Reservoir through increasing stream habitat stability and reducing sediment and nutrient runoff. The purchase will further protect water quality by precluding the paving and buildings that would have been associated with the possible construction of up to eight residential lots on the property.

In addition to providing protection to the water quality of the Rocky Gorge Reservoir, the acquisition of this property preserves the environmental setting of one of the County's historic resources. Maiden's Fancy is a remarkably well-preserved federal style brick dwelling dating from 1807. Five acres will remain with the historic house under the ownership of Mrs. Crook and will not be subject to further subdivision. The house is required to be maintained as an historic structure according to County preservation regulations.

This acquisition helps to preserve both historic resources and water quality. "Preserving our drinking water supply is critical to the future viability of Montgomery County and our neighbors who share it," said Montgomery County Planning Board Chairman Derick P. Berlage, "and conservation of important tracts of land near the reservoirs is a key tool to protect the quality of that water supply."

"Water is our most precious resource," said Councilmember Marilyn Praisner. "Protecting and preserving our stream valleys and our watersheds will yield immeasurable benefits for future generations. Through Legacy Open Space we are making significant additions to our existing stream valley park system to protect these resources."

Maiden's Fancy is one of four Legacy Open Space properties being announced today. "These four acquisitions are real evidence of the strong commitment this County has made to preserving existing open spaces for our kids and our grandkids," said Council President Steve Silverman. "That's why the Council has stepped up to the plate to provide funding now for this vital purpose – before properties such as these are lost forever."

Legacy Open Space is a bold, 10-year initiative proposed by the Planning Board and approved by the Montgomery County Council to conserve and steward land of exceptional value. The Legacy Open Space Functional Master Plan identifies methods for protecting sensitive natural resources, water supply areas, heritage resources, greenways and trail connections, farmland and rural open space, and urban open space. Some resources may be purchased and added to the park system, while others may be protected through easement or public/private partnerships. A total of 1,290 acres of land has so far been protected throughout the County under the Legacy Open Space program since the program's inception in 2000.

Support for the initial phase will come from County general obligation and park bonds. Additional future revenue is targeted to come from corporations, state and federal agencies, municipalities, and individual gifts to assure the land=s availability for future generations. The Commission has also partnered with the Montgomery Parks Foundation to coordinate private donations to the program.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission encourages the involvement and participation of all individuals in its facilities and programs. For assistance with special needs, such as sign language interpretation, large print materials, listening devices, etc., contact the Community Relations Office, 301-495-4600, TTY 301-495-1331 or the Maryland Relay Service, 1-800-735-2258.

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